

THE HERITAGE OF CYRIL AND METHODIUS IN RUSSIA

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I

THE Russian Primary Chronicle, in a passage describing the measures taken in 1037 by the Russian sovereign Yaroslav to provide his subjects with Slavonic translations of Byzantine books—a passage written in the eleventh or early twelfth century—makes the following observation: “Great is the profit obtained from book learning: for through books we are taught the way of repentance, and from the written word we gain wisdom and self-control. Books are rivers which water the entire world; they are the springs of wisdom; in books there is an unfathomable depth; by them we are consoled in sorrow; they are the bridle of self-control. . . . He who reads books often converses with God, or with holy men.”¹ Such statements are no doubt a commonplace of mediaeval literature; yet their conventional character cannot, even today, wholly obscure the genuine emotion with which the chronicler, who was probably a Russian monk, affirms that the life of men can be greatly enriched by the reading of books. And, as the context of this passage plainly shows, the chronicler’s emotion is heightened by his knowledge that his compatriots have now been provided with books in their own Slavonic language. This he gratefully attributes to the enlightened action of the rulers of his own land—Yaroslav, Prince of Kiev, and his father Vladimir who converted Russia to Christianity in the late tenth century. So concerned is the chronicler to extol the virtues of these two Russian sovereigns in promoting the Slav vernacular culture that he fails, in this passage, to mention the fountainhead of this culture—the work of Cyril and Methodius. Yet, as we shall see, the Russians of the Middle Ages were well aware of the true origins of their vernacular literature, and cherished with gratitude and veneration the memory of the two Byzantine apostles of the Slavs; and the same Russian Primary Chronicle contains other passages which clearly acknowledge that the Russians owe their alphabet, their literature, and their scholarly tradition, to the Moravian mission of Constantine and Methodius. One of the aims of this paper is to demonstrate that the importance of this mission, and its relevance to the cultural history of the Eastern Slavs, were appreciated in mediaeval Russia; the second aim is to outline the history of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in mediaeval Russia and to assess the role it played in the culture and thought-world of the Eastern Slavs: I would emphasize the word “outline”; for it is clear to me that the “Heritage of Cyril and Methodius in Russia” is a problem too vast and complex to be treated, within the scope of a single lecture, in any but a fragmentary and tentative manner.

¹ *Povest' vremennykh let*, ed. by V. P. Adrianova-Peretts and D. S. Likhachev (Moscow-Leningrad, 1950), I, pp. 102–3; English translation by S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 137. In subsequent references to this document the original will be cited as “Povest’,” and the translation as “Cross.”

I propose to approach my subject chronologically. I shall concentrate mainly on the period which begins with the official acceptance of Christianity in the late tenth century and ends in the early twelfth. It was then, notably in the eleventh century, that Russian literature was born; it was then, too, that Russian national consciousness found its first articulate expression. The central part of my theme—the heritage of Cyril and Methodius in eleventh-century Russia—will be introduced by a brief sketch of its antecedents on Russian soil, and will be followed by an epilogue illustrating its impact on late mediaeval Russia.

II

Our story begins with a puzzle, which has taxed the ingenuity of many a scholar. The first recorded conversion of the Russians to Christianity took place in the sixties of the ninth century: contemporary Byzantine sources inform us that this conversion closely followed the Russian attack on Constantinople in 860;² that by 867 the Russians had accepted a bishop from Byzantium;³ and that about 874 an archbishop was sent to them by the Patriarch Ignatius.⁴ This first ecclesiastical organization on Russian soil seems to have been submerged, later in the century, by a wave of paganism which swept away the pro-Christian rulers of Kiev and replaced them by a rival group of Scandinavians from North Russia. Yet there is little doubt that a Christian community survived, at least in Kiev, attracting a growing number of converts throughout the tenth century, until Russia's final conversion in the reign of St. Vladimir, in 988 or 989. Some of the Russian envoys who ratified the treaty with the Empire in Constantinople in 944 were Christians, and a Christian church, ministering to a numerous community, existed in Kiev at that time;⁵ in 957 Princess Olga, regent of the Russian realm, was baptized in Constantinople;⁶ and in 983, a few years before Vladimir's conversion, two Christian Varangians were martyred in Kiev for their faith.⁷

It is apparent from these facts that the beginnings of Russian Christianity coincide in time with the Moravian mission of Constantine and Methodius and with the conversion of Bulgaria to the Christian faith; and that a Christian community existed in Kiev, continuously or with brief interruptions, for 125 years before Vladimir's baptism. Moreover, the comparatively rapid establishment of a diocesan organization at the end of the tenth century, the perceptive and mature understanding of the Christian life revealed by Russian writers of the next two generations, and the high literary standards attained by some of

² Theophanes Continuatus (Bonn), p. 196.

³ Photius, *Epistolae*, PG, 102, cols. 736–7.

⁴ Theoph. Contin., pp. 342–3. Cf. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, I (Munich-Berlin, 1924), p. 60.

⁵ *Povest'*, I, p. 39; Cross, p. 77. The Russo-Byzantine treaty, dated by the chronicler to 945, was in fact concluded in the previous year. See *Povest'*, II, p. 289; Dölger, *op. cit.*, I, p. 80.

⁶ *Povest'*, I, pp. 44–5; Cross, pp. 82–3. For the date and place of Olga's baptism, see G. Laehr, *Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1930), pp. 103–6; F. Dvornik, *The Slavs, Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956), pp. 200–1.

⁷ *Povest'*, I, pp. 58–9; Cross, pp. 95–6.

them in the Slavonic language strongly suggest that the Russian ecclesiastical leaders and intellectual élite of that time were building on earlier foundations; and it is only natural to suppose that these older foundations were such as to ensure the survival of the Christian community in Kiev as a going concern for more than a century before Vladimir; that this community, in other words, was provided with an effective clergy, intelligible Scriptures, and a liturgy capable of satisfying the spiritual needs of the Slav and Varangian converts to the Christian religion. We would expect, in brief, to find traces in Russia, between 860 and 988, of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition of Slavonic vernacular Christianity.

These traces, however, are singularly insubstantial. The evidence which scholars have extracted from the sources, or dug out from the ground, amount to a few meagre crumbs: it has been maintained, for instance, that the Slavonic texts of the Russo-Byzantine peace treaties of the tenth century, preserved in the Primary Chronicle, prove that the Russians could by that time read and write in Slavonic, although we do not know for certain when or where these documents were translated from the Greek;⁸ the observation that Princess Olga, at the time of her baptism and visit to Constantinople in 957, knew no Greek and relied on the service of interpreters has led to the suggestion that the liturgy may have been celebrated in Slavonic for her benefit in Kiev;⁹ the fact that in the eleventh century the Russians had some acquaintance with the Glagolitic script has been taken to mean that they imported, not later than the middle of the tenth century, the Slavonic liturgy and books from Macedonia, where the Glagolitic tradition was still in existence;¹⁰ a Cyrillic inscription, consisting of a single word, was discovered on a clay vessel during excavations near Smolensk in 1949, and was dated by its discoverer, D. A. Avdusin, to the first quarter of the tenth century:¹¹ all this, in terms of direct evidence, does not amount to very much.

And yet it seems likely enough that well before Vladimir's conversion, by the mid-tenth century at the latest, the Christian community in Kiev was familiar with the Slavonic liturgy, with Slavonic translations of parts of the Scriptures, and with Slav-speaking priests. It is permissible to speculate where

⁸ See D. S. Likhachev, in *Povest'*, II, pp. 257, 278. For the text of these treaties, see *Povest'*, I, pp. 24-9, 34-9, 52; Cross, pp. 64-8, 73-7, 89-90. Cf. S. Mikucki, "Études sur la diplomatie russe la plus ancienne. I. Les traités byzantino-russes du X^e siècle," *Bulletin international de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et des Lettres*, cl. de philol., d'hist. et de philos., no. 7 (Cracow, 1953), pp. 1-40; I. Sorlin, "Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au X^e siècle," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, II (1961), 3, pp. 313-60, 4, pp. 447-75.

⁹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis* (Bonn), I, p. 597. Cf. P. A. Lavrovsky, "Issledovanie o Letopisi Yakimovskoy," *Uchenye Zapiski Vtorogo Otdeleniya Imper. Akademii Nauk*, II, 1 (1856), p. 149.

¹⁰ See M. Speransky, "Otkuda idut stareishie pamyatniki russkoy pis'mennosti i literatury?," *Slavia*, VII, 3 (1928), pp. 516-35; B. S. Angelov, "K voprosu o nachale russko-bolgarskikh literaturnykh svyazey," *Trudy Otdela Drevnerusskoy Literatury*, XIV (1958), pp. 136-8. On the Glagolitic tradition in mediaeval Russia, see V. N. Shchepkin, "Novgorodskie nadpisi Graffiti," *Drevnosti. Trudy Imper. Moskovskogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva*, XIX, 3 (1902), pp. 26-46; G. Il'insky, "Pogodinskie kirillovsko-glagolicheskie listki," *Byzantinoslavica*, 1 (1929), p. 102.

¹¹ D. A. Avdusin and M. N. Tikhomirov, "Drevneishaya russkaya nadpis'," *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR* (1950), 4, pp. 71-9.

these may have come from. Common linguistic and ethnic ties, and the political relations which existed in the tenth century between the Eastern Slavs on the one hand, and the Western and Southern Slavs on the other, may well have facilitated, or even provoked, the spread of Slav priests and books to Russia either from the former territories of Great Moravia, or else from Bulgaria.¹²

Some of these priests and books may even have come from Constantinople where, at least in the second half of the ninth century, the Byzantine authorities assembled Slav-speaking priests and stockpiled Slavonic books for the needs of missionary enterprises beyond the Empire's northern borders. We have no direct evidence to show how far, before or after the time of Vladimir, the Byzantine missionaries in Russia deliberately encouraged the Slavonic vernacular as a means of evangelizing the country; however, the rapid establishment of this tradition in Russia after Vladimir's conversion, to the virtual exclusion of the Greek language from the liturgy at a time when the Russian Church was governed by prelates appointed by Constantinople, strongly suggests that the East Roman authorities acknowledged that the tradition of vernacular Slavic Christianity, which had already yielded rich dividends in Bulgaria, was the only one that could reasonably be imposed on the numerous population of their powerful and distant northern proselyte.¹³

This introductory survey has rested less on direct information—which is fragmentary and equivocal—than on circumstantial evidence and on later material derived from the eleventh century. It is customary to blame the Russian Primary Chronicle for our inadequate knowledge of the beginnings of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in Russia. It is indeed at first sight surprising that this document, compiled in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, which treats in such detail of the earliest history of the Russian people and is so plainly concerned with the fate of Russian letters and learning, has nothing precise to say about the channels through which the Slav vernacular tradition came to Russia. It attributes, as we have seen, the introduction of book learning to Vladimir and his son Yaroslav. Are we then to conclude that the author, or authors, of the Chronicle knew nothing of any earlier beginning, and that they believed that the Christian community in Kiev before Vladimir's time celebrated the liturgy in Greek? Different answers have been given to this question. The Russian scholar N. K. Nikol'sky, in a study of the Russian Primary Chronicle, published in 1930, argued that its compilers were perfectly

¹² On Russia's relations with Bohemia in the tenth century, see A. V. Florovsky, *Chekhi i vostochnye slavyane*, I (Prague, 1935), pp. 1-44. On Russia's relations with Bulgaria in the same period, see M. N. Tikhomirov, "Istoricheskie svyazi russkogo naroda s yuzhnyimi slavyanami s drevneishikh vremen do poloviny XVII veka," *Slavyansky Sbornik* (Moscow, 1947), pp. 132-52.

¹³ For the Byzantine attitude toward the tradition of Slavonic vernacular Christianity, see F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX^e siecle* (Paris, 1926), pp. 298-301; I. Dujčev, "Il problema delle lingue nazionali nel medio evo e gli Slavi," *Ricerche Slavistiche*, VIII (1960), pp. 39-60; I. Ševčenko, "Three Paradoxes of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission," *The Slavic Review*, XXIII (1964), pp. 226-32. The problem is complex and requires further investigation; in the meantime, it may be tentatively suggested that the farther a given Slavonic country was situated from Constantinople, and the less chance there consequently was of Hellenizing its culture, the more ready the Byzantine authorities generally were to consolidate its Christianity and to ensure its loyalty to the Empire by encouraging it to acquire and develop the Slav vernacular tradition.

aware of the Slavonic origin of Russian Christianity, but deliberately avoided any mention of it, in order to give greater prominence to the story of Vladimir's baptism by Byzantine missionaries, to present the conversion as an exclusively Greek achievement, and thus to justify the claims of the Byzantine clergy to ecclesiastical hegemony over Russia.¹⁴ This thesis should be considered in a broader context: for the past fifty years it has been fashionable to regard the authors of the Primary Chronicle as men moved by political passions and factional loyalties, propagandists not averse to suppressing, twisting, or inventing evidence to gratify their prejudices or to flatter their ecclesiastical or secular patrons. This view is best epitomized in the well known history of Kievan Russia by M. D. Priselkov, published in 1913, who carried to extreme, and sometimes absurd, lengths the more balanced and cautious conclusions of his teacher Shakhmatov, that unrivalled authority on Russian chronicles.¹⁵ The problem of the reliability of the Primary Chronicle is too large and too complex to be discussed here. I can only express my personal belief that, although the compilers of the Chronicle did at times show a personal bias in the selection and presentation of their material, to maintain or imply that they were wholesale forgers, playing an elaborate game of hide-and-seek with their mediaeval readers (and with modern scholars as well), is to overestimate their ingenuity, to degrade their sense of history, and to ascribe to them motives which are, to say the least, anachronistic.

What Nikol'sky called "the mysterious silence" of the chronicler about the early introduction of Slavonic letters into Russia can, it seems to me, be explained more satisfactorily if we suppose that he was ignorant of the facts, rather than that he took part in a conspiracy to suppress them. He had, as we shall see, precise and detailed information on the Moravian mission of Constantine and Methodius; but the circumstances in which the fruits of this mission were first acquired by the Russians must have remained unknown to him. The Soviet scholar V. M. Istrin has plausibly suggested that this ignorance may be explained by the gradual, sporadic, and undramatic way in which the Slav vernacular tradition filtered in to Russia in the tenth century; and by the fact that among its carriers—Slav-speaking priests from the Balkans or the West Slavonic area—no memorable personality emerged of the calibre of Cyril and Methodius and their immediate disciples.¹⁶

III

It is scarcely possible to doubt that elements of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition—priests, books, and the liturgy—came to Russia before the time of Vladimir. It would, however, be unwise to exaggerate the extent and import-

¹⁴ N. K. Nikol'sky, "Povest' vremennykh let, kak istochnik dlya istorii nachal'nogo perioda russkoy pis'mennosti i kul'tury," *Sbornik po Russkomu Yazyku i Slovesnosti Akademii Nauk SSSR*, II, 1 (Leningrad, 1930). See the review of this work by G. Il'insky, *Byzantinoslavica*, 2, 2 (1930), pp. 432-6.

¹⁵ M. D. Priselkov, "Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoy istorii Kievskoy Rusi X-XII vv.," *Zapiski ist.-filol. fak. Imperat. Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta*, CXVI (1913).

¹⁶ V. M. Istrin, "Moravskaya istoriya slavyan i istoriya polyano-rusi, kak predpolagaemye istochniki nachal'noy russkoy letopisi," *Byzantinoslavica*, 3 (1931), pp. 327-32, 4 (1932), pp. 51-7.

ance of this penetration. It was only after Russia's official conversion to Christianity in 988 or 989, which led to the strengthening of the links with Byzantium and the establishment of a nation-wide ecclesiastical structure under the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, that the problem of building a Slav vernacular Church became really urgent.¹⁷ For this new period, which spans and slightly overlaps the eleventh century, we have considerably more information; and much of it comes from the Russian Primary Chronicle.

In an entry dated 898, the Chronicle gives a fairly detailed account of the Moravian mission of Constantine and Methodius; this is preceded by a brief note describing the invasion of Moravia by the Magyars; the introductory section of the Chronicle has a further entry which refers to the earliest history of the Slavs and to their dispersal from their primeval European home.¹⁸ This introductory entry is linked with the later note on the conquest of Moravia by a common emphasis on the ethnic and linguistic unity of the Slav peoples; and both the entry and the note are connected with the account of the Moravian mission by the importance they all ascribe to "Slavonic letters" (*gramota slověnskaja*) as a force expressive of Slav unity. The scholars who have studied these various entries in the Chronicle—A. Shakhmatov, P. Lavrov, N. Nikol'sky, V. Istrin, and, most recently, Professor Jakobson—are agreed that they are all fragments of a single work, stemming from a Cyrillo-Methodian environment, and brought to Russia from the West Slavonic area.¹⁹ Shakhmatov, who called it *The Tale about the Translation of Books into the Slav language* (*Skazanie o prelozhenii knig na slovensky yazyk*)—the name has stuck—plausibly suggested that it came to Russia in the eleventh century; and Professor Jakobson has described it as "a Moravian apologetic writing of the very end of the ninth century."²⁰

For our present purpose, the most interesting of these surviving fragments is the account of the Moravian mission. It has long been known to contain four separate quotations from the *Vita Methodii*, and to be generally based on this work, with several borrowings from the *Vita Constantini*.²¹ On several points, however, the version of the Russian Chronicle deviates from the *vitae* of the apostles of the Slavs: on none of them is the Russian version reliable; most of the divergences may be ascribed to error or confusion on the chronicler's part: for instance, he states quite wrongly that Kocel, as well as Rastislav and

¹⁷ For Russia's conversion to Christianity in the reign of Vladimir, see *Povest'*, I, pp. 59–81; Cross, pp. 96–117, 244–8; Laehr, *Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches*, pp. 110–15; G. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (New Haven, 1948), pp. 60–5. For the establishment of a Byzantine hierarchy in Russia, see D. Obolensky, "Byzantium, Kiev, and Moscow. A Study in Ecclesiastical Relations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 11 (1957), pp. 23–5; L. Müller, *Zum Problem des hierarchischen Status und der jurisdiktionellen Abhängigkeit der russischen Kirche vor 1039* (Cologne, 1959) (*Osteuropa und der deutsche Osten*, III, 6).

¹⁸ *Povest'*, I, pp. 11, 21–3; Cross, pp. 52–3, 62–3.

¹⁹ A. Shakhmatov, "Povest' vremennykh let i ee istochniki," *Trudy Otdela Drevne-Russkoy Literatury*, IV (1940), pp. 80–92; P. Lavrov, "Kirilo ta Metodiy v davn'o-slov'yans'komu pis'menstvi," *Zbirnik Ist.-Filol. Viddilu, Ukraïns'ka Akademiya Nauk*, 78 (1928), pp. 129–136; Nikol'sky, *op. cit.*; Istrin, *op. cit.*; R. Jakobson, "Minor Native Sources for the Early History of the Slavic Church," *Harvard Slavic Studies*, 11 (1954), pp. 39–47.

²⁰ R. Jakobson, "Comparative Slavic Studies," *The Review of Politics*, XVI, 1 (1954), p. 79.

²¹ See Shakhmatov, "Povest' vremennykh let i ee istochniki," *op. cit.*, pp. 87–9; Jakobson, "Minor Native Sources," *op. cit.*, p. 40.

Svatopluk, requested a teacher from Byzantium, that the Slavonic alphabet was invented in Moravia, and that toward the end of his life Constantine taught in Bulgaria; in one case, however, the Russian chronicler can be suspected of deliberately deviating from his sources: he acknowledges that the work of Constantine and Methodius was supported by the Papacy, but makes no mention of their stay in Rome; this omission, probably due to anti-Roman censorship, suggests the hand of a revisor of the late eleventh or early twelfth century, when hostility to the Latin Church was beginning to gain ground in Russia.²²

As source material on the Moravian mission, the *Tale about the Translation of Books* is wholly derivative and of no great value to the historian. Yet in other respects this document is of considerable interest: it proves that the Russian chronicler was familiar with the written Lives of Constantine and Methodius; it shows how a West Slavonic work, breathing the authentic spirit of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, could be adapted to a specifically Russian situation; and, whether in its original or adapted form, it made, as I shall presently suggest, a small but not insignificant contribution to that tradition.

The emphasis which the *Tale* repeatedly lays on the unity of the Slavonic language; its manifest pride in the "power" and "intelligibility"²³ of the Slavonic letters created by Constantine and Methodius which, it tells us explicitly, are a common patrimony of the Moravians, the Bulgarians, and the Russians; its critical attitude to the "trilingual heresy," that *bête noire* of the Slavonic apostles and of their disciples:²⁴ these are familiar and characteristic ingredients of the Cyrillo-Methodian thought-world. But in its concluding part, which obviously bears the mark of a Russian revision, the *Tale* breaks new ground, and claims that the heritage of Cyril and Methodius has been acquired by the Russian people; it bases this claim on a series of syllogistic arguments: the Slavonic letters were brought by Constantine and Methodius to the Moravians; the Russians, like the Moravians, are Slavs, and speak the same Slav language; the conclusion is implied that the Russians, too, are pupils of the Slavonic apostles; furthermore, Moravia and Pannonia, the lands of Methodius' spiritual jurisdiction, had once been evangelized by St. Andronicus, one of Christ's seventy disciples; but St. Andronicus was the disciple of St. Paul, who himself preached in Moravia. Therefore St. Paul is the teacher

²² See Jakobson, *ibid.*, p. 41.

²³ For the use of *sila* and *razum* in the Cyrillo-Methodian vocabulary, see Jakobson, *ibid.*, p. 41, note.

²⁴ *Povest'*, I, p. 22: "Certain men rose up against them [i.e. against Cyril and Methodius], murmuring and saying: 'It is not right for any people to have its own alphabet, except for the Jews, the Greeks, and the Latins, according to Pilate's inscription, which he caused to be inscribed on the Lord's cross.'" Cf. Cross, 63. The "trilingual heresy," based on the view that Hebrew, Greek, and Latin are the only legitimate liturgical languages, is ascribed by Constantine's biographer to the Latin clerics who opposed Constantine and Methodius in Moravia and who disputed with the former in Venice. See *Vita Constantini*, XV, 5-9, XVI, 1-5, XVIII, 9: *Constantinus et Methodius Thessalonicenses. Fontes*, ed. by F. Grivec and F. Tomšič (Zagreb, 1960) (*Radovi Staroslavenskog Instituta*, 4), pp. 131, 134, 141. Cf. *Vita Methodii*, VI, 3-4, *ibid.*, p. 156. On the "trilingual heresy," see Dujčev, "Il problema delle lingue nazionali nel medio evo e gli Slavi," *op. cit.*; *id.*, "L'activité de Constantin Philosophe-Cyrille en Moravie," *Byzantinoslavica*, 24 (1963), pp. 221-3.

of the Slavs, and the Russians, by virtue of being Slavs and pupils of St. Methodius, are likewise disciples of St. Paul.²⁵ By means of these complicated constructions, and by appealing to the current though legendary tradition that Paul and Andronicus preached in northern Illyricum and Pannonia, the Russian chronicler traces the spiritual ancestry of his people back to Cyril and Methodius on the one hand, and to St. Paul on the other. The conjunction of names is significant, for the veneration of St. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, is an essential feature of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition.²⁶

There is clearly something artificial in these putative spiritual genealogies; even the syntax of this passage in the Chronicle is awkward: there are eleven causal conjunctions in nine lines. The chronicler's patent embarrassment doubtless stems from his inability to identify the historical channels through which the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage penetrated from Moravia to Russia; and it confirms the view I expressed earlier that his silence on this point comes from ignorance, not from bad faith. At the same time he is conscious, and rightly so, that the Slav vernacular tradition which flourished in Russia in his day has its roots in the Moravian mission of Constantine and Methodius.

Two Scriptural quotations inserted in the *Tale* seem to me of special interest, and suggest that the chronicler, or his source, did more than just reiterate the classic themes of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. The first of them is embedded in the phrase: "The Slavs rejoiced to hear the mighty works of God in their own tongue"; and in a later passage the Pope is made to declare: "All nations shall tell the mighty works of God, as the Holy Spirit will give them utterance."²⁷ The latter citation is taken from Pope Hadrian II's letter to Rastislav, Svatopluk, and Kocel, as quoted in the eighth chapter of the *Vita Methodii*;²⁸ and both of these quotations in the Chronicle are also derived, practically verbatim, from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verses four and eleven, which describes the descent of tongues of fire upon the Apostles at Pentecost. So far we are on familiar Cyrillo-Methodian ground, for the gift of tongues is a theme closely related to that of vernacular languages, and the Pope's citation of Acts II in the *Vita Methodii* implies that the appearance of the Slavonic liturgy and books can be regarded as a second Pentecost. However, these two Pentecostal quotations acquire an added significance if we relate them to the introductory part of the Primary Chronicle, which immediately precedes the first fragment of the *Tale*: this introduction, based largely, though not exclusively, on the Slavonic translation of the Byzantine chronicle of George Hamartolos,²⁹ begins with the story of the division of the earth among the sons of Noah after the Flood, and ends with a brief account of the building of the Tower of Babel. The Russian version of the latter episode, based, it would seem, on a Slavonic version of a lost historical compendium

²⁵ *Povest'*, I, p. 23; Cross, p. 63.

²⁶ Cf. Jakobson, "Minor Native Sources," *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4.

²⁷ "I radi byša slověni, jako slyšiša veličĭja Božĭja svoimĭ jazykomĭ . . . Vsi vŕzŕglagoljutĭ jazyki veličĭja Božĭja, jako že dastĭ imĭ Svjatyi Duchĭ otvĕščevati": *Povest'*, I, p. 22; Cross, p. 63.

²⁸ *Vita Methodii*, VIII, 13 (Grivec-Tomšič, p. 158).

²⁹ *Povest'*, I, pp. 9-11; Cross, pp. 51-2. Cf. Shakhmatov, "Povest' vremennykh let i ee istochniki," *op. cit.*, pp. 41-5; *Povest'*, II, pp. 203-13; Cross, p. 231.

mainly derived from the chronicles of John Malalas and George Hamartolos,³⁰ states that when the Lord scattered His people over the face of the earth, the pristine linguistic and ethnic unity of mankind gave way to a multiplicity of languages and nations. The Russian chronicler deliberately links this Biblical introduction to his account, which follows immediately, of the early history and dispersal of the Slavs, by placing them both among the heirs of Japheth and among the seventy-two nations which were scattered from the Tower of Babel. The conclusion seems inescapable that the chronicler wished to suggest a contrast between the former multiplicity of tongues and the present unity of the Slavonic languages, a unity to which Cyril and Methodius gave a new significance; and that he did so by implying that the Slavonic letters are an extension of the miracle of Pentecost whereby the Holy Spirit rescinded the confusion of tongues which sprang from the Tower of Babel. This contrast between Pentecost and Babel, which gives a new and more universal dimension to the work of Cyril and Methodius, is not, as far as I know, explicitly drawn in any other work of the mediaeval Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. One or the other of the two contrasting themes is touched upon occasionally: the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages are mentioned in Khrabr's celebrated defence of the Slavonic letters, written in Bulgaria in the late ninth or the early tenth century;³¹ and, as Professor Jakobson has shown, the Pentecostal miracle is alluded to in a *troparion* of a canon to Cyril and Methodius, dating from the same period, which states that Cyril "received the grace of the Holy Spirit equal to that of the Apostles."³² It is true that the *Prologue to the Holy Gospels*, an Old Church Slavonic poem attributed by many scholars to Constantine himself, seems to go some way toward implying a contrast between Babel and Pentecost: its third line reads: "Christ comes to gather the nations and tongues";³³ but only in the Russian Primary Chronicle are the two terms of the contrasting parallel clearly brought out.

The origin of this idea is not hard to find: the contrast between Babel and Pentecost, and the belief that the latter has cancelled the former, are repeatedly emphasized in the Byzantine offices for Whitsunday. The *kondakion* of the feast makes the point with particular clarity: "When the Most High went down and confused the tongues, he divided the nations: but when He distrib-

³⁰ Shakhmatov, *ibid.*, pp. 44-5, 72-7.

³¹ For the text of Khrabr's treatise *O pismenechŭ*, see P. A. Lavrov, *Materialy po istorii vozniknoveniya drevneishey slavyanskoy pis'mennosti* (Leningrad, 1930) (*Trudy Slavyanskoy Komissii Akademii Nauk SSSR*), pp. 162-4; I. Ivanov, *Bŭlgarski Starini iz Makedoniya*, 2nd ed. (Sofia, 1931), pp. 442-6. On Khrabr, see I. Snegarov, "Chernorizets Khrabrŭ," *Khilyada i sto godini: slavyanska pismenost, 863-1963. Sbornik v chest na Kiril i Metody* (Sofia, 1963), pp. 305-19; A. Dostál, "Les origines de l'Apologie slave par Chrabr," *Byzantinoslavica*, 24 (1963), pp. 236-46; V. Tkadlčŭk, "Le moine Chrabr et l'origine de l'écriture slave," *Byzantinoslavica*, 25 (1964), pp. 75-92. The older literature on the subject is listed in G. A. Il'insky, *Opyt sistematicheskoy Kirillo-Mefod'evskoy bibliografii* (Sofia, 1934), pp. 27-8; M. Popruzenko and St. Romanski, *Kirilometodievskaya bibliografiya za 1934-1940 god* (Sofia, 1942), pp. 30-1.

³² R. Jakobson, "St. Constantine's Prologue to the Gospel," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, VII, 1 (1963), p. 15. Cf. Lavrov, *Materialy*, p. 113 (no. 22).

³³ "Christosŭ gredetŭ jazyki sŭbrati": Lavrov, *ibid.*, p. 196; cf. R. Nahtigal, "Rekonstrukcija treh starocerkvenoslovanskih izvornih pesnitev," *Razprave Akademije Znanosti in Umetnosti v Ljubljani, filozofsko-filološko-historični razred*, I (1943), pp. 76-122; for an English translation of the *Prologue*, see Jakobson, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-19.

uted the tongues of fire, He called all men to unity."³⁴ We do not know whether this idea, which is so succinctly expressed in the Greek and Slavonic service of Pentecost and is also to be found in the writings of several Greek Fathers,³⁵ was directly applied to the Slavs by the Russian chronicler, or whether he found it in his source, the *Tale about the Translation of Books*; be that as it may, the notion that the Slavonic peoples share in the Pentecostal abrogation of Babel can be regarded as a significant addition to the storehouse of Cyrillo-Methodian ideas.

The chronicler's adaptation of the *Tale about the Translation of Books* shows how close was the connection in his mind between the conversion of the Russians to Christianity and their acquisition of the Cyrillo-Methodian vernacular tradition; by contrast, as we have seen, he did not know when and how this tradition first came to Russia. He is not much more informative on this point when he comes to the reign of Vladimir. Yet common sense suggests that the establishment of Christianity as the state religion in his reign would have been impossible had not a Slav-speaking clergy preached the Gospel and celebrated the liturgy in the vernacular on a wide scale. But of this we know next to nothing. It is true that the so-called "Chronicle of Joachim," a seventeenth-century compilation, no longer extant, based on mediaeval sources, and discovered and quoted in part by the eighteenth-century historian Tatishchev, contains several statements which, if true, would give us just the facts we need. After Vladimir's conversion to Christianity, we are told in this source, Symeon, tsar of Bulgaria, sent to Russia "learned priests and sufficient books."³⁶ The view that the "Chronicle of Joachim" is a fabrication by Tatishchev has been abandoned by historians generally,³⁷ and this particular piece of evidence is accepted as genuine by a number of scholars. As early as 1856, P. A. Lavrovsky attempted to explain away the anachronistic connection between Vladimir

³⁴ "Ὅτε καταβὰς τὰς γλώσσας συνέχεε, διεμέρισεν ἔθνη ὁ Ὑψιστος· ὅτε τοῦ πυρὸς τὰς γλώσσας διένειμεν, εἰς ἐνότητα πάντας ἐκάλεσε (Πεντηκοστάριον Χαρμόσουνον [Rome, 1883], p. 400).

³⁵ The idea that the Pentecostal miracle, by reuniting the languages of the earth, repealed the confusion of tongues which followed the building of the Tower of Babel, implied by Origen (*In Genesim*, PG, XII, col. 112), was explicitly formulated by Gregory Nazianzen (*Oratio XLI: in Pentecosten*, PG, XXXVI, col. 449), John Chrysostom (*De Sancta Pentecoste, Homilia II*, PG, L, col. 467; *In epistolam I ad Cor. Homilia XXXV*, 1, PG, LXI, col. 296), Cyril of Alexandria (*Glaphyra in Genesim*, II, PG, LXIX, cols. 77, 80), Cosmas Indicopleustes (*The Christian Topography*, ed. by E. O. Winstedt [Cambridge, 1909], bk. III, pp. 95–7), and the Emperor Leo VI (*Oratio XII: in Pentecosten*, PG, CVII, col. 128). Cf. A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, I (Stuttgart, 1957), pp. 236–9, 246, 249–50, 252, 262–3, 302. Gregory Nazianzen expressed the contrast between Babel and Pentecost in the following terms: Πλὴν ἐπαινετὴ μὲν καὶ ἡ παλαιὰ διαίρεσις τῶν φωνῶν (ἡνίκα τὸν πύργον ὠκοδόμουν οἱ κακῶς καὶ ἀθέως ὁμοφωνοῦντες, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν νῦν πολυῶσί τινες)· τῇ γὰρ τῆς φωνῆς διαστάσει συνδιαλυθὲν τὸ ὁμόγνωμον, τὴν ἐγγείρησιν ἔλυσεν· ἀξιεπαυτεωτέρα δὲ ἡ νῦν θαυματουργουμένη. Ἀπὸ γὰρ ἐνὸς Πνεύματος εἰς πολλοὺς χυθεῖσα, εἰς μίαν ἁρμονίαν πάλιν συνάγεται (PG, XXXVI, col. 449). An Old Church Slavonic translation of this sermon by St. Gregory on Pentecost, preserved in an eleventh-century manuscript in Russia, existed there in the thirteenth century at the latest. See *XIII slov Grigoriya Bogoslova v drevneslavjanskome perevode po rukopisi Imper. Publichnoy Biblioteki XI veka*, ed. by A. Budilovich (St. Petersburg, 1875), pp. iv, 270–82, esp. p. 281. For an English translation of this sermon, see *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. by P. Schaff and H. Wace, VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1955), pp. 378–85.

³⁶ V. N. Tatishchev, *Istoriya Rossiiskaya*, I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1962), p. 112.

³⁷ See S. K. Shambinago, "Ioakimovskaya Letopis'," *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, XXI (1947), pp. 254–70; M. N. Tikhomirov, in Tatishchev, *ibid.*, p. 50.

and Symeon (who died half a century before the former's accession) by referring to the statement of the Byzantine chronicler Cedrenus that Romanus, son of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter, assumed the name of his grandfather Symeon.³⁸ Romanus is believed by some historians to have been tsar of Bulgaria between about 979 and 997. However, though Romanus was undoubtedly a contemporary of Vladimir, it is far from clear that he ever reigned in Bulgaria.³⁹ A further statement in the "Chronicle of Joachim" seems to confirm that Vladimir's clergy was partly of Slavonic origin: the Byzantine authorities, it asserts, sent to Vladimir the Metropolitan Michael, a Bulgarian by nationality, to head the Russian Church.⁴⁰ This Michael, we may note, is mentioned as the first primate of Russia in several sixteenth-century sources.⁴¹ However, tempting though it is to accept the statements of the "Chronicle of Joachim" on the penetration of a Slavonic clergy and books into Russia in the late tenth century, there are, in my opinion, too many uncertainties connected with this text to make it possible to regard it as reliable evidence.

The earliest trustworthy account relating to the use of Slavonic in the Russian Church does, however, come from the reign of Vladimir; and it is supplied by the Primary Chronicle. In an entry dated 988, the chronicler tells us that after the Russians had been baptized Vladimir "sent round to assemble the children of noble families, and gave them to be instructed in book learning."⁴² It is *prima facie* highly improbable that the teaching in these earliest known Russian schools was conducted in Greek; some knowledge of the Greek language was doubtless imparted to the members of Vladimir's *jeunesse dorée* who were destined for high office in the Russian Church; but there is every reason to believe that by "book learning" (*učenie knižnoe*) the chronicler meant literary instruction in Slavonic. Evidence that this was so is provided by the chronicler's comment on Vladimir's schools, in a passage which immediately follows the account of their foundation: "When these children

³⁸ Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, II (Bonn), p. 455; P. A. Lavrovsky, "Issledovanie o Letopisi Yakimovskoy," *op. cit.*, pp. 147-8. Cf. V. Nikolaev, *Slavyanobŭlgarskiyat faktor v khrystiyanizatsiyata na Kievskaya Rusiya* (Sofia, 1949), pp. 80-8; V. Moshin, "Poslanie russkogo mitropolita Leona ob opresnokakh v Okhridskoy rukopisi," *Byzantinoslavica*, 24 (1963), p. 95.

³⁹ Romanus, together with his brother Boris (the former tsar of Bulgaria) fled from Constantinople to Bulgaria about 979. Boris was killed on the way, but Romanus succeeded in joining the Comitopulus Samuel, who led the anti-Byzantine revolt in Macedonia. The statement of the eleventh-century Arab historian Yahya of Antioch that Romanus was proclaimed tsar of Bulgaria was accepted by V. N. Zlatarski (*Istoriya na Bŭlgarskata Dŭrzhava*, I, 2 [Sofia, 1927], pp. 647-59) and by N. Adontz ("Samuel l'Arménien, roi des Bulgares," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, classe des lettres*, XXXIX [1938], p. 16). However, S. Runciman (*A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* [London, 1930], p. 221) and G. Ostrogorsky (*History of the Byzantine State* [Oxford, 1956], p. 267) point out, probably with better reason, that Romanus, being a eunuch, was disqualified from occupying the throne.

⁴⁰ Tatishchev, *Istoriya Rossiiskaya*, I, p. 112.

⁴¹ *Nikonovskaya Letopis'*, s. a. 988: *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisey*, IX (St. Petersburg, 1862), p. 57; *Kniga Stepen'naya Tsarskogo Rodosloviya*, *ibid.*, XXI, 1 (St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 102. Both these sources describe Michael as a Syrian. Michael is also mentioned as the first metropolitan of Russia in several fifteenth-century manuscripts of the Church Statute of Vladimir: See *Pamyatniki drevne-russkogo kanonicheskogo prava*, pt. 2, fasc. 1, ed. by V. N. Beneshevich: *Russkaya Istoricheskaya Biblioteka*, XXXVI (Petrograd, 1920), p. 4; cf. E. Golubinsky, *Istoriya russkoy tserkvi*, I, 1, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1901), pp. 277-81, 621, note 5.

⁴² "Poslav' nača poimati u naročitye čadi děti, i dajati nača na učenie knižnoe." *Povest'*, I, p. 81; Cross, p. 117.

were assigned to study books in various places, there was fulfilled in the land of Russia the prophecy which says: 'In that day shall the deaf hear the words of a book, and the tongue of the dumb shall be clearly heard.'"⁴³ There is, I submit, much significance in this Biblical quotation. It is a composite one, and is drawn from two different chapters of the Septuagint version of the Book of Isaiah, the first half from Isaiah 29:18, the second half from Isaiah 35:6.⁴⁴ In its original context it describes the change in Israel's relation to Jahweh, by which the people's blindness and stupidity will give way to knowledge and joy. "The words of a book" (λόγους βιβλίου) are the commands of Jahweh, and these will be accepted when the book is unsealed⁴⁵. These words of Isaiah are in the Primary Chronicle adapted to the Russian people's new relationship to God after their conversion to Christianity; and "the words of a book" (λόγοι βιβλίου), by a translation both semantically accurate and creatively fitted to a new situation, are rendered in Slavonic as *slovesa knižnaja*, an expression which refers to the Christian Scriptures, but is also a technical term for the Scriptures and liturgy translated into the Slavonic tongue.

The idea of applying the words of Isaiah to the Slav vernacular tradition was not an invention of the Russian chronicler. It has not, so far as I know, been observed that his conflation of the two quotations from Isaiah 29:18 and Isaiah 35:6 has an exact parallel in the fifteenth chapter of the *Vita Constantini*, where they are likewise combined and placed in a similar context. This chapter, which describes Constantine's work in Moravia, opens with the following words: "When Constantine arrived in Moravia Rastislav received him with great honour and, having assembled some disciples, he gave them to him to be instructed. He soon translated the whole of the ecclesiastical office, and taught them the services of matins, the canonical hours, vespers, compline, and the sacred liturgy. And, according to the words of the prophet, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, and they heard the words of a book (*kniž'naa slovesa*), and the tongue of the dumb was clearly heard."⁴⁶ The similarity between these two passages in the Primary Chronicle and in the *Vita Constantini* is striking: both contain the same composite quotation drawn from two different chapters of the Book of Isaiah; both apply the prophet's λόγους βιβλίου to the Slavonic vernacular; and there is an obvious analogy between Rastislav's and Vladimir's educational measures: both are said to have assembled pupils and to have assigned them for instruction. There can be little doubt that the passage in

⁴³ "Sim že razdajanomъ na učenie knigamъ, sъbystъsja proročestvo na rusъstěi zemli, glagoljušče: 'Vo ony dnii uslyšatъ glusii slovesa knižnaja, i jasne budetъ jazykъ gugnivych'," *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Καὶ ἀκούσονται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ κωφοὶ λόγους βιβλίου (Is. 29: 18) . . . καὶ τρανὴ ἔσται γλῶσσα μογιλάων (Is. 35 : 6).

⁴⁵ See *The Book of Isaiah, translated from a critically revised Hebrew text with commentary*, by E. J. Kissane, I (Dublin, 1960), p. 320. Cf. Is. 29: 11.

⁴⁶ "Дошѣдѣшу же јему Мораву, съ великоју чьстїју пријетъ јего Растиславъ и ученикы събравъ и вѣдастъ и učiti. Вѣскорѣ же вѣсъ сръковныи чинъ приимъ научи је утрѣници и часовомъ и веѣр'нии и pavečer'nici i tainěi služ'bě. I otnvъzoše se proročьskomu slovese ušesa gluchyichъ i uslyšaše kniž'naa slovesa i jazykъ jasne bystъ gugnivyichъ." *Vita Constantini*, XV, 1-3 (Grivec-Tomšič, p. 131). In their translation of this passage Grivec and Tomšič erroneously derive the citations *et aperta sunt . . . aures surdorum* and *et lingua plana facta est balborum* from Is. 35 : 5 and Is. 32 : 4, respectively (*ibid.*, p. 202). They have also failed to observe that the words *ut audirent verba scripturae* are a quotation from Is. 29 : 18.

the Russian Primary Chronicle is directly based on the opening section of the fifteenth chapter of Constantine's Life. And this leads to the following conclusions: firstly, borrowings by the Russian chronicler from the *Vita Constantini* are not confined to the early sections of the chronicle which go back to the *Tale about the Translation of Books*; secondly, the Russian chronicler, by making use of the fifteenth chapter of the *Vita Constantini* and quoting from it, implied a parallel between the introduction of the Slavonic liturgy and Scriptures into Moravia through the combined efforts of Constantine and Rastislav, and their transmission to Russia on the initiative of Vladimir; and thirdly, the chronicler was convinced that Vladimir's educational measures really marked the beginning of the vernacular Slav tradition in Russia: in which belief, as we have seen, he was not altogether correct.

We know regrettably little about Vladimir's Slavonic schools; their beginnings cannot have been altogether smooth, to judge from the chronicler's ironic statement that the mothers of these conscripted pupils "wept over them, as though they were dead."⁴⁷ The brighter of these alumni, who must have become adults by the year 1000 at the latest, doubtless formed the nucleus of that educated élite which produced the earliest works of Russian literature in the first half of the eleventh century.⁴⁸ This and the following generation of scholars must have taken an active part in the second of Russia's educational reforms, promoted by Vladimir's son Yaroslav and to which I alluded at the beginning of this paper. This reform is described in the Primary Chronicle under the year 1037. Yaroslav, repeatedly termed a "lover of books," which he is said to have read frequently night and day, "assembled many scribes and had them translate from Greek into the Slavonic language. And they wrote many books." These books, we are told in a subsequent passage, were deposited by Yaroslav in the newly built church of St. Sophia in Kiev, the principal cathedral in the land.⁴⁹

The origin and nationality of Yaroslav's translators are unknown. That some of them were Russians can scarcely be doubted. Others may have been Greeks or Slavs from Byzantium. It is very probable that the group included Bulgarian priests and scholars, some of them perhaps refugees who had fled their land after the Byzantine conquest in 1018. It is not impossible that some were Czechs. It has been suggested that the traces of various Slav languages found in some translations current in Russia at the time indicate that Yaroslav's

⁴⁷ *Povest'*, I, p. 81; Cross, p. 117.

⁴⁸ On the Russian literature of the eleventh century, see M. N. Speransky, *Istoriya drevney russkoy literatury*, 3rd ed., I (Moscow, 1920), pp. 113-345; V. M. Istrin, *Ocherk istorii drevnerusskoy literatury domoskovskogo perioda* (Petrograd, 1922), pp. 118-57; A. S. Orlov, *Drevnyaya russkaya literatura* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1945), pp. 1-93; N. K. Gudzy, *Istoriya drevney russkoy literatury*, 6th ed. (Moscow, 1956), pp. 45-89, 96-104; English translation: *History of Early Russian Literature* (New York, 1949), pp. 84-146; D. Tschizewskij (Chyzhevsky), *Geschichte der altrussischen Literatur im 11., 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1948), pp. 105-57, 174-99; *id.*, *History of Russian Literature from the Eleventh Century to the End of the Baroque* (The Hague, 1960), pp. 20-81. The masterpiece of this literature, the *Sermon on Law and Grace* by Hilarion, metropolitan of Kiev, is the subject of an excellent critical edition and study by L. Müller, *Des Metropoliten Ilarion Lobrede auf Vladimir den Heiligen und Glaubensbekenntnis* (Wiesbaden, 1962).

⁴⁹ *Povest'*, I, pp. 102-3; Cross, pp. 137-8.

translators formed a kind of international commission.⁵⁰ Here, however, the historian finds himself on peculiarly slippery ground: he cannot safely venture over it before he has an answer to three questions: What writings of Greek religious and secular literature were available in Russia in the early Middle Ages? Which of these translations can with reasonable certainty be attributed to Russian hands? And of these Russian translations, which were executed in the reign of Yaroslav, that is, between 1019 and 1054? On none of these questions do philologists appear to have reached a consensus of opinion. A. I. Sobolevsky supposed that nearly all the extant translations made in Bulgaria in the ninth and tenth centuries were available in Russia during the first centuries after Russia's conversion.⁵¹ The same scholar drew up a tentative list of thirty-four of these translations which, in his opinion, were done by Russians in the pre-Mongol period. These include the Life of St. Andrew Salos, the Life of St. Theodore the Studite, the Monastic Rule of Studios, the Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes, Josephus Flavius' History of the Jewish War, the Romance of Alexander, the Bee (Μέλισσα), the Physiologus, and the *Devgenievo deyanie*, generally regarded as a fragmentary Russian translation of an early version of *Digenis Akritas*.⁵² V. M. Istrin, in his monumental edition and study of the Slavonic version of the Chronicle of Hamartolos, has argued that this work was translated in Kiev, in the forties of the eleventh century, by a Russian member of Yaroslav's pool of translators.⁵³ But this view has been disputed, or at least modified, by several scholars.⁵⁴ Philologists are always reminding us how difficult it is to distinguish on linguistic grounds an Old Church Slavonic text written in Russia from one composed in Bulgaria or Bohemia, so homogeneous, until the end of the eleventh century, was the common Slavonic written tradition.⁵⁵ And the historian who seeks to avoid the dangers of overemphasizing the cultural achievements of Kievan Russia must surely heed these words of caution. He will admit the contribution made by Russian scholars, in the eleventh century and later, to the available store of Old Church Slavonic translations from Greek; he will acknowledge that many, perhaps most, of the translations available in the Kievan period came from Bulgaria; and, to complete the picture, he will also recognize that some literary works stemming from the very area where Constantine and Methodius had worked—Moravia and Bohemia—were brought to Russia in the eleventh century. Among these works, written in the Czech recension of Old Church Slavonic and available in

⁵⁰ See Chyzhevsky, *Geschichte der altrussischen Literatur*, pp. 69–70, 84.

⁵¹ A. I. Sobolevsky, *Perevodnaya literatura Moskovskoy Rusi XIV–XVII vekov* (St. Petersburg, 1903), p. v.

⁵² A. I. Sobolevsky, "Materialy i issledovaniya v oblasti slavyanskoy filologii i arkheologii," *Sbornik Otdeleniya Russkogo Yazyka i Slovesnosti Imp. Akademii Nauk*, LXXXVIII (1910), no. 3, pp. 162–77.

⁵³ V. M. Istrin, *Khronika Georgiya Amartola v drevnem slavyanorusskom perevode*, 3 vols. (Petrograd, 1920–2, Leningrad, 1930), esp. vol. II, pp. 268–309.

⁵⁴ See N. Durnovo, "K voprosu o natsional'nosti slavyanskogo perevodchika Khroniki Georgiya Amartola," *Slavia*, IV (1925), pp. 446–60; P. A. Lavrov, "Georgy Amartol v izdaniy V. M. Istrina," *ibid.*, pp. 461–84, 657–83.

⁵⁵ See R. Jakobson, "The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature," *Harvard Slavic Studies*, I (1953), pp. 37–41.

the Kievan period, were the Martyrdom of St. Vitus, the Martyrdom of St. Appolinarius of Ravenna, and Gumpold's Life of St. Wenceslas of Bohemia—all translations from the Latin; and the original Slavonic Lives of St. Wenceslas and St. Ludmila.⁵⁶ The cult of these two Czech saints in Kievan Russia is a striking but by no means isolated example of the close cultural and religious links which existed between Russia and Bohemia in the late tenth and in the eleventh century, at a time when Bohemia was still a living repository of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition.⁵⁷

Evidence of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in eleventh-century Russian literature is not confined to Old Church Slavonic writings imported into Russia from the Balkans and Bohemia. Significant traces of this tradition can also be found in the earliest products of native literature, composed in the Russian recension of Old Church Slavonic. In an anonymous Tale (*Skazanie*), written in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, describing the murder of the saintly princes Boris and Gleb, a parallel is drawn between their martyrdom and that of St. Wenceslas of Bohemia,⁵⁸ and, as Professor Chyzhevsky has pointed out, the influence of Gumpold's Life of St. Wenceslas can probably be detected in the approximately contemporary *Vita* (*Chtenie*) of Boris and Gleb by the monk Nestor, and in the *Vita* of St. Theodosius of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves by the same author.⁵⁹ The connection between the cult of St. Wenceslas and that of Boris and Gleb acquires added significance if we recall that relics of these two Russian saints were deposited inside the altar of the Abbey of Sazava in Bohemia, that important center of the Slavonic liturgy and literature in the eleventh century.⁶⁰

It has been suggested by several scholars that the influence of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition can also be detected in the attempts of some early Russian writers to define the place occupied by their nation within the Christian community. Professor Jakobson, in an essay entitled "The Beginnings of National Self-Determination in Europe," has argued that a distinctive feature of the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage was the idea that a language used for the celebration of the liturgy acquires a sacred character, which is then assumed by the people which speaks it; and the cognate notion that every nation has its own particular gifts and its own legitimate calling within the universal family of Christian peoples. This concept of national self-determination, he suggests, shaped the outlook of the early writers of Kievan Russia;⁶¹ and with this

⁵⁶ On these and other works brought from Bohemia to Kievan Russia, see R. Jakobson, "Some Russian Echoes of the Czech Hagiography," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves*, VII (1939-44), pp. 155-80; Chyzhevsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1; F. Dvornik, *The Making of Central and Eastern Europe* (London, 1949), pp. 242-7; Jakobson, *The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature*, pp. 41-8.

⁵⁷ See Florovsky, *Chekhi i vostochnye slavyane*, I, pp. 11-58, 99-151, 158-99.

⁵⁸ *Zhitiya svyatykh muchenikov Borisa i Gleba*, ed. by D. I. Abramovich (Petrograd, 1916), p. 33.

⁵⁹ D. Čyževskýj (Chyzhevsky) "Anklänge an die Gumpoldslegende des hl. Václav in der altrussischen Legende des hl. Feodosij und das Problem der 'Originalität' der slavischen mittelalterlichen Werke," *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch*, I (1950), pp. 71-86.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 84; cf. Florovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-7, 128.

⁶¹ R. Jakobson, "The Beginnings of National Self-Determination in Europe," *The Review of Politics*, VII, 1 (1945), pp. 29-42.

view the late George Fedotov, to judge from his book *The Russian Religious Mind*, would have concurred.⁶² If the ideological basis of the Cyrillo-Methodian movement be thus defined, the theme of this paper could legitimately be widened to include a discussion of national and patriotic motifs in early Russian literature; and of the attitude of its writers to the Byzantine Empire and to its claims to world supremacy. But these are problems too large and complex to be discussed here. Enough, I think, has been said to show that the Cyrillo-Methodian inheritance was a vital force in eleventh-century Russia.

IV

We cannot, for lack of information, trace the continuous history of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition in Russia after the early twelfth century. It is only in the late Middle Ages that the evidence becomes clearer and more abundant. And this evidence suggests that in the late fourteenth and in the fifteenth century interest in the work of Cyril and Methodius, which may have flagged somewhat after the early twelfth century,⁶³ began to revive, and that attempts were made in that period to claim that their missionary activity, and particularly that of Constantine, had been directly connected with Russia. The motive forces behind these unhistorical constructions were probably a renewed interest in Russia's past history and international connections, a nationalistic desire of the Russians to claim some of the brothers' achievement for themselves, and, doubtless, genuine error. Thus, the anonymous Greek "philosopher," who in the Primary Chronicle delivers a speech of inordinate length, and dubious orthodoxy, to persuade Vladimir to accept Byzantine Christianity, is in two fifteenth-century chronicles given the name Cyril;⁶⁴ a Greek account of Russia's conversion to Christianity, the so-called Banduri Legend, preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript and partly based on a lost Slavonic source, contains the colorful story of the dispatch by the Emperor Basil I to Russia of two missionaries, Cyril and Athanasius, who baptized the Russians and taught them the Slavonic alphabet;⁶⁵ finally a Russian text, found in a manuscript of the *Tolkovaya Paleya*, copied in 1494 and subsequently inserted in an account of the death of Cyril and the conversion of Vladimir, contains these words: "Be it known to all nations and all men . . . that the Russian alphabet was by God made manifest to a Russian in the city of Cherson; from it Constantine the philosopher learned, and with its help he composed and

⁶² G. P. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (New York, 1960), pp. 405-12.

⁶³ See N. K. Nikol'sky, "K voprosu o sochineniyakh, pripisyvaemykh Kirillu Filosu," *Izvestiya po Russkomu Yazyku i Slovesnosti Akademii Nauk SSSR* (1928), I, 2, pp. 400-2.

⁶⁴ *Povest'*, I, pp. 60-74, II, pp. 330-5; Cross, pp. 97-110; *Novgorodskaya Chetvertaya Letopis'*, s.a. 986: *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisey*, IV, 1 (Petrograd, 1915), p. 61; *Sofiiskaya Pervaya Letopis'*, s.a. 986: *ibid.*, V (St. Petersburg, 1851) p. 115. Cf. A. A. Shakhmatov, *Razyskaniya o drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh* (St. Petersburg, 1908), pp. 152-3, 231, 558.

⁶⁵ The complete text of the "Banduri Legend" was published by V. Regel (*Analecta Byzantino-Russica* [St. Petersburg, 1891], pp. 44-51; cf. *ibid.*, pp. xix-xxxii) and by I. Sakkelion (*Διήγησις ἀκριβὴς ὅπως ἐπαπίσθη τὸ τῶν Ῥώσων ἔθνος, ἐκ πατριακοῦ χειρογράφου ἐκδομένη* [Athens, 1891]). The scorn poured on this work by Golubinsky (*Istoriya russkoy tserkvi*, I, 1², pp. 247-52) is not altogether justified. For a more balanced assessment of its historical value, see I. Dujčev, "Le testimonianze bizantine sui Ss. Cirillo e Metodio," *Miscellanea francescana. Rivista di scienze, lettere ed arti*, LXIII (Rome, 1963), pp. 10-14.

wrote books with Russian words."⁶⁶ The interest of this text, which is clearly based on the eighth chapter of the *Vita Constantini*,⁶⁷ lies in the author's attempt to interpret the passage, so hotly debated by modern scholars, which describes how Constantine during his stay in Cherson in the winter of 860–1 discovered a Gospel book and a Psalter written *rus'skymi pismeny*. It is curious to note that the attempt to interpret this passage of the *Vita Constantini* to mean that the Slavs had invented a Slavonic alphabet before Cyril—a view still vigorously championed by some East European scholars⁶⁸—goes back to an anonymous Russian patriot of the fifteenth century.

These belated and factitious claims, and the somewhat antiquarian interest in the work of Cyril and Methodius which they reveal, bear some characteristic marks of the historical thinking of early Muscovite Russia. And yet the Russians of the fifteenth century could, with far better reason, point to a genuine and recent instance which showed that the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition was still a vital and creative force in their country. About 1378 a Russian monk by the name of Stephen went to preach the Gospel to the pagan Zyrians; this East Finnic people, known today as Komi, lived in the northeastern part of European Russia, in the basin of the Vychegda river, and were then subjects of the republic of Novgorod. Before embarking on his mission, Stephen learnt their language, invented a Zyrian alphabet and, with the approval of the Muscovite authorities, translated the liturgical books into Zyrian. He successfully Christianized his flock by preaching and singing the offices in their vernacular, disputing with the pagan shamans, building churches, and training disciples. In 1383 he was consecrated Bishop of Perm', and spent the last fourteen years of his life ably administering his Zyrian diocese. He died in 1396, and was later canonized by the Russian Church.⁶⁹

The striking analogy between the achievements of St. Stephen of Perm' and

⁶⁶ V. Istrin, "Iz oblasti drevne-russkoy literatury," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, CCCLV (October, 1904), p. 344; Cf. V. Jagić, "Rassuzhdeniya yuzhnoslavyanskoy i russkoy stariny o tserkovno-slavyanskom yazyke," *Issledovaniya po Russkomu Yazyku (Otdelenie Russkogo Yazyka i Slovesnosti Imp. Akademii Nauk)*, I (1885–95), pp. 308–9; Lavrov, *Materialy*, pp. 36–7; B. S. Angelov, "Kirilometodievoto delo i ideyata za slavyansko edinstvo v staroslavianskite literaturi," *Slavistichen Sbornik*, II (Sofia, 1958), pp. 47–8.

⁶⁷ *Vita Constantini*, VIII, 15 (Grivec-Tomšič, p. 109). Cf. Shakhmatov, "Povest' vremennykh let i ee istochniki," *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁶⁸ The controversial words are: "I obrët' že tu evaggelie i psaltir', rus'skymi pismeny [*var. roszsky pismenъ*] pisano," Grivec-Tomšič, pp. 109, 111. A leading protagonist of the view that the passage refers to "Russian," i.e. Slavonic, letters is E. Georgiev (*Slavyanskaya pis'mennost' do Kirilla i Mefo-diya* [Sofia, 1952], pp. 48–52). For earlier attempts to interpret this passage of the *Vita Constantini*, see the bibliographies in Il'insky, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–7, and in Popruzhenko and Romanski, *op. cit.*, p. 56. More convincing is the view of A. Vaillant, who argued that *rus'skymi* is a misspelling for *sur'skymi* i.e. Syriac letters: "Les 'lettres russes' de la *Vie de Constantin*," *Revue des études slaves*, XV (1935), pp. 75–7. Cf. R. Jakobson, "Saint Constantin et la langue syriaque," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientales et slaves*, VII (1939–44), pp. 181–6. For a general discussion of the problem of possible attempts before Constantine to create a Slavonic alphabet, see I. Dujčev, "Vüprosüt za vizantiisko-slavyanskite otnosheniya i vizantiiskite opiti za süzdavane na slavyanska azbuka prez pürvata polovina na IX vek," *Izvestiya na Instituta za Bülgarska Istoriya*, Bülgarska Akademiya na Naukite, VII (1957), pp. 241–67.

⁶⁹ *Zhitie sv. Stefana, episkopa Permskogo*, ed. by V. Druzhinin, photomechanic reprint with an introduction by D. Čizevskij (Chyzhevsky) (The Hague, 1959). Cf. G. Lytkin, "Pyatisotletie zyryanskogo kraya," *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, CCXXX (1883), pp. 275–326; *id.*, *Zyryansky kray pri episkopakh permskikh i zyryansky yazyk* (St. Petersburg, 1889). Golubinsky, *Istoriya russkoy tserkvi*, II, 1, pp. 262–96.

those of Constantine-Cyril is pointedly emphasized by Stephen's biographer and contemporary, Epiphanius the Most Wise. He calls Stephen "in truth the New Philosopher," and describes him as an accomplished Greek scholar; champions the cause of vernacular liturgies and Scriptures by quoting extensively from the defence of the Slavonic letters by the monk Khrabr, that knight-errant of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition; and even improves on Khrabr by suggesting that although St. Cyril and St. Stephen were equal in goodness and wisdom, and though they performed tasks of the same importance, Stephen's merit was the greater, for whereas Cyril was assisted by his brother Methodius, Stephen had no help save from God.⁷⁰

Thus, at the end of our story, in the Russia of the late Middle Ages, we find the vitality of the Cyrillo-Methodian inheritance manifested not only in literary reminiscences, but also in the example of a man who in his personal life embodied the ideals and emulated the achievements of the two Byzantine missionaries. But in contrast to their performance the work of St. Stephen proved ephemeral. In the centralized Muscovy of the sixteenth century there was no place for the rights of vernacular languages, and the liturgical books of the Zyrians gradually fell into disuse.⁷¹ Yet Stephen's missionary achievements were applauded by the Russian Church; and, above all, the memory of those who had inspired his life-work—St. Cyril and St. Methodius—continued to be reverently cherished by his compatriots. It is significant that the great majority of the extant manuscripts—complete or fragmentary—of their two biographies come from Russia: forty-four out of fifty-nine for the *Vita Constantini*, fourteen out of sixteen for the *Vita Methodii*.⁷² Liturgical offices for Sts. Cyril and Methodius are included in the early Russian *Menaia*, the oldest of which go back to the late eleventh century: one of these early hymns addresses Cyril as follows: "Cyril, glorious teacher of virtue, you taught the Moravians to give thanks to God in their own language, by translating God's religion and its righteousness from Greek into the Slavonic language; therefore the Slavonic nations now rejoice and glorify God."⁷³

In concluding this paper, I feel impelled to express a feeling of doubt that frequently assailed me during its preparation. I am acutely conscious of the

⁷⁰ *Zhitie sv. Stefana*, pp. 8, 69, 70–3. The analogy may be carried further by observing that both the Moravian and the Zyrian missions had a political aspect. Cyril and Methodius were ambassadors of the Byzantine Emperor to Moravia; Stephen's work among the Zyrians enjoyed the active support of the Muscovite secular authorities, who seized this opportunity of extending their influence over the Novgorodian lands along the Vychehda river, which they annexed in the fifteenth century. For the relations between Stephen and Prince Dimitri of Moscow, see *Zhitie sv. Stefana*, p. 59; for the political significance of the Zyrian mission, see *Ocherki Istorii SSSR, Period Feodalizma, IX–XV vv.*, 2 (Moscow, 1953), pp. 455–9.

⁷¹ As early as the fifteenth century Slavonic began to replace Zyrian in the liturgy of St. Stephen's diocese. However, the Zyrian vernacular was still used in monastic offices in the Komi region in the eighteenth century. See G. Lytkin, *Pyatisolletie zhyryanskogo kraya*, pp. 296–9; V. I. Lytkin, *Istoricheskaya grammatika komi yazyka*, I (Syktyvkar, 1957), pp. 40–1; *Id.*, *Drevnepermsky yazyk* (Moscow, 1952), pp. 50–9, 63, 75.

⁷² See B. S. Angelov, "Slavyanski izvori za Kiril i Metody," *Izvestiya na Dürzhavna Biblioteka "Vasil Kolarov" za 1956 g.* (Sofia, 1958), pp. 181–6. Angelov's list includes incomplete manuscripts and nineteenth-century copies.

⁷³ Lavrov, *Materialy*, p. 115. Cf. R. Jakobson, "The Slavic Response to Byzantine Poetry," *Actes du XII^e Congrès international d'études byzantines*, I (Belgrade, 1963), pp. 261–2.

fact that a historian who is not a trained philologist cannot, in discussing the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage in Russia, do justice to what he must surely acknowledge to be an essential, perhaps the essential, component of this heritage. I refer to the Old Church Slavonic language, acquired by the Russians partly in its Moravian but more especially in its Bulgarian recension, which became the medium for their religious expression and the foundation of their mediaeval literature, sacred and secular. Blending in the course of time with the native vernacular speech, later re-injected several times into the secularized Russian language by dictates of literary fashion, Old Church Slavonic has never ceased to enrich the vocabulary and the thought-world of the Russian people. The vernacular tradition which it created may have acted to some extent as a screen between the Russians and the culture of antiquity, and have been partly responsible for the fact that a good knowledge of Greek was comparatively rare in mediaeval Russia. Yet we must not forget that Old Church Slavonic was itself modelled on Greek; and that it enabled the Russians to produce an abundant literature of their own, which ranks high in the history of their culture.

One element in this Church Slavonic tradition has proved of peculiar strength and vitality: the Christian liturgy, which so moved the Russian mediaeval chronicler that he attributed the conversion of his country to the beauty of the public worship in Constantinople,⁷⁴ and which, in its Slavonic version, continues even today to bear witness to the undying strength of Orthodox Christianity in the midst of the Soviet atheistic state.

I would justify this concluding reference to a contemporary situation, which some of us may be disposed to view with optimism and hope, by appealing to the very nature of the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. For surely hope and optimism, and their spiritual counterpart, joy, are a central theme of this tradition: joy which springs from the knowledge that the commands of the Lord are no longer a sealed book, that the Word has been made manifest to men, that the confusion of Babel has been repealed by the Pentecostal gift of tongues, and that "the divine shower of letters"⁷⁵ has been sent down upon the Slavonic nations. This sense of triumph is conveyed most powerfully in the opening verses of the thirty-fifth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the very verses from which the authors of the *Vita Constantini*, of the Russian Primary Chronicle and of the Life of St. Stephen of Perm',⁷⁶ quoted to describe the bounty of the Slav vernacular tradition: "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.... Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be clearly heard.... They shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God."

⁷⁴ *Povest'*, I, p. 75; Cross, p. 111.

⁷⁵ "Trěbujšče dážda Božii bukvy": *Prologue to the Holy Gospels*, in Lavrov, *Materialy*, p. 197.

⁷⁶ Like the author of the *Vita Constantini* and the Russian chronicler, Epiphanius, in his biography of St. Stephen, combines the two quotations from Isaiah 35 : 6 and Isaiah 29 : 18: *Zhitie sv. Stefana*, pp. 66. See *supra*, notes 43 and 46. Ševčenko has pointed out further parallels between the *Vita Constantini* and the Life of St. Stephen, which strongly suggest that Epiphanius made use of the former document (*Three Paradoxes of the Cyrillo-Methodian Mission*, p. 225, note 19).